

Hello and thanks for allowing us the opportunity to speak today. We are Diana Kaye and James Hahn, the founders of TerrEssentials of Middletown, Maryland. We have a small organic farm where we have organic herbal educational gardens and an organic retail boutique. We also handcraft nearly one hundred different organic and natural personal care products, many of which can meet the current and post-Harvey NOP standards for food. We are here today to request that the members of the NOSB work with us to protect organic consumers and the interests of organic farmers and convince the USDA to bring personal care products under the NOP umbrella.

As you know, the OFPA clearly defines an “agricultural product” to be 'any agricultural commodity or product, whether raw *or processed* ... marketed in the United States for human or livestock consumption.'

We submit to you today that personal care products are most definitely consumed. We make products that are absorbed into the body through the skin and products that are used on the lips and are ingested. It is well known that a person's largest source of chemical exposure is via inhalation, the second largest route of chemical exposure is via skin absorption and the third largest source of toxic exposure is via ingestion. Scientists estimate that 60% of what is applied topically to the skin can be absorbed into the body through the skin within minutes. For example, the Washington Post reported that, in studies conducted by the US Army, Army researchers found that they were able to deliver nutrients (vitamins) more effectively to troops on the move via skin patches than through conventional pills or capsules. Pharmaceutical companies are offering more and more drugs utilizing skin delivery patches: hormone patches, nicotine patches, etc. Because personal care products are absorbed into the body and because they can be such a significant source of chemical exposure, it is extremely important that personal care products that are advertised as “organic” be held to the same standard as organic food.

Another issue to consider is the downstream impact of the personal care products. The EPA's top environmental waterway scientist, Christian Daughton, has identified dozens of personal care product chemicals in our waterways – oleochemical detergents, preservatives, fragrances, sunscreens, etc., – yes, even those chemicals found in “natural” and “organic” personal care products – as persistent pollutants and, disturbingly, many as xenoestrogens/endocrine disruptors. Certain chemical preservatives used in some personal care products labeled as “organic” have been found in cancerous breast tumors and have been identified as endocrine disruptors. Many of the chemicals are persistent because they are used every day and washed down the drains every day. Is it right for products using “organic” on the label to be viewed by our own EPA as serious environmental pollutants?

Here are a few quotes from the EPA report "PPCPs as Environmental Pollutants - Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in the Environment: Overarching Issues and Overview" by Christian G. Daughton, Chief, Environmental Chemistry Branch, ESD/NERL, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Protection Agency:

"One large class of chemicals receiving comparatively little attention comprises the pharmaceuticals and active ingredients in personal care products, which are used in large amounts throughout the world; **quantities of many are on par with agrochemicals.**"

"Perhaps more so than with any other class of pollutants, the occurrence of PPCPs in the environment highlights the intimate, inseparable, and immediate connection between the actions, activities, and behaviors of individual citizens and the environment in which they live. PPCPs, in contrast to other types of pollutants, owe their immediate origins in the environment directly to their worldwide, universal, frequent, highly dispersed, and individually small but cumulative usage by multitudes of individuals -- as opposed to the larger, highly delineated industrial manufacturing/usage of most high-volume synthetic chemicals."

Here is a very important directive from the EPA that clearly outlines the need for NOSB and USDA cooperation with this very serious environmental problem:

"Importance of Individual Action: EDUCATE public on (i) how their individual actions, activities, and behaviors each contributes to the burden of PPCPs in the environment, (ii) how PPCPs can possibly affect aquatic biota (and even impact drinking water)"

Since 2002, consumers have been told over and over again that there are now federal regulations in place for organic "products." Unfortunately, the media has failed to report accurately on the current state of NOP regulatory affairs and consumers have been led to believe that any product that bears the word "organic" on the label is now regulated by the USDA. When consumers walk into their local "healthy" market, many believe that they can trust that the "products" that are in these stores are now officially regulated by the USDA. When the consumer sees the word organic anywhere in these stores, they think that the products using that word on the label are all certified to the National Organic Program standard. They do not understand that though they can buy certified organic carrots in the produce department, just across the store in the shampoo aisle the word organic has no regulation, and no meaning, at all. Consumers are buying hundreds of millions of dollars of synthetic products bearing the word "organic" on the label because they believe that these products ARE regulated by the NOP. The sad truth is that the consumers are being misled and are paying premium prices for synthetic products that are degrading the organic philosophy and that are creating much consumer distrust of the new organic regulations. This is wrong on many levels, and this is why the NOSB should urge the USDA to step up to the plate to end this destructive practice and require any product using the word organic to meet the current organic regulations.

We stated earlier that personal care products are most definitely consumed. To illustrate this point we brought along some dessert for everyone today. Actually, we have two products here that we'd like to show you. Our first product is quite simple and very elegant. This product is our 100% organic cocoa butter. Our cocoa butter is quite lovely. It is full flavor, full aroma USDA certified organic agricultural food product: 100% cocoa butter and we package it in this handy 3 oz. pushup container for easy application. Yes, it is a food product and cocoa butter is a very effective moisturizing product that has been recommended by medical doctors/obstetricians for decades as a very safe moisturizing product for pregnant women's bellies to help to prevent stretch marks. Of course, our cocoa butter is the finest because it is certified organic. It also makes a very delicious and effective lip protector – a product that is eaten. To prove my point, I'll take a bite of our cocoa butter product right now. Mm-mm-m...delicious! Boy, do my lips feel great! Would anyone else care to try some?

Our second product is a multi-ingredient product, a beautiful Body Oil for massage or moisturizing. Every ingredient is a USDA certified organic agricultural **food**: sunflower oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, all organic herbs and organic essential oils. It is a very effective moisturizer and massage oil; it feels good, smells delightful and also tastes delicious! I know because I ate this product at a press conference in Washington DC one year ago.

When consumers see the word “organic” on our cocoa butter, they are getting exactly what they expect. So, what’s the problem? Unfortunately, the vast majority of products in the natural products marketplace do not follow the organic standards. In fact, the shelves of the stores and the internet are flooded with so many synthetic products represented as “organic” that the consumers don’t often get a chance to see, smell, taste or purchase our true organic products. It is a sad fact that many stores are making so much money selling synthetic products labeled as “organic,” that they are not interested in learning the truth about what is really in those products, or in offering our line. How much money is being made in the “natural” and “organic” personal care products sector? The industry estimates that sales of personal care products advertised as “natural” and “organic” are around \$4 billion dollars in the US alone, nearly double what they were just two years ago.

Educated consumers have been learning that they cannot trust the word “organic” for personal care products. Some folks find it easy to be suspicious when they read the ingredients and see chemical names that they can’t even pronounce. Other consumers, however, see the chemical names and are confused, but they buy the product anyway because they trust that the USDA is looking out for them. Sadly, many of the informed consumers that are seeing this inconsistency in regulation are becoming increasingly distrustful of the organic label on all of the products that use it and are telling their friends and family not to trust organic products.

The representation of synthetic chemical personal care products as “organic,” “truly organic” and even “certified organic” is not simply an annoyance, it is an egregious situation that is escalating out of control and threatens to harm, perhaps destroy, the many years of hard work and sacrifice of many true organic farmers, producers and philosophers. Are you all willing to allow greed to compromise the integrity of the organic label and to denigrate your life’s efforts?

Organic was born out of a vision that embraced honesty, a higher consciousness, global sustainability, a healthier population and the healing of our planet. Won’t you please work with us to protect our word “organic” before it is destroyed by greedy barons who seek to exploit the word, our work, and consumer trust?

We urge you to persuade the USDA to enforce the organic regulations for all personal care products that use the word organic.

Thank you for your consideration.

For additional reference, following are some suggested reports and web sites that can provide further documentation/background on this issue:

<http://www.ewg.org/reports/skindeep/report/impurities.php>

<http://www.epa.gov/esd/chemistry/pharma/book-summary.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/chemistry/ppcp/images/errata.pdf>

<http://www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/index.htm>